

**APPLICATION FOR UNITED STATES LETTERS PATENT
IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE**

(MBHB Case No. 03-906)

**Title: JOBSITE STORAGE CHEST WITH REMOVABLE TRAY AND
ACCESS FOR ELECTRICAL CORD PASSTHROUGH**

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

This invention relates to the field of storage chests. More particularly, this invention relates to a jobsite storage chest that includes a removable tray for holding tools and equipment and an access to allow for electrical cord passthrough.

2. Description of Related Art

Jobsite storage chests are common on construction sites of all magnitudes. These chests are used to store tools, hardware, and equipment used for various projects. One attractive feature of these chests is that they are constructed of heavy gauge steel and therefore are secure enough that contractors can leave their tools and equipment in the chests overnight. Although a number of jobsite storage chests are currently on the market, all of them suffer from common drawbacks.

Some jobsite storage chests are provided with a shelf to hold small tools and accessories such as bolts, nuts, and tape measures. When present, these shelves are typically welded to the inside side walls of the storage chest. Thus, if a contractor needs to use the tools carried by the shelf, he must remove them from the shelf and carry them to the location at which they are needed. Once the task is complete, the contractor must again carry the tools back to the storage chest. Often this requires multiple trips back and forth. It is apparent that this practice is cumbersome and time-consuming for the contractor.

Further, some equipment stored in the storage chest requires access to an electric supply. For example, battery chargers stored in the storage chest must be connected to a power supply in order to charge the batteries used with tools such as drills. In the past, some contractors drilled a hole through the wall of the chest in order to allow access to a power supply, which was a time-consuming exercise. Alternatively, cords were run from the equipment over the side wall of the chest to a power supply. When the cover of the chest was shut, it would pinch the cord between the cover and the top of the side wall. The presence of the cord would make it difficult for the chest to be locked properly. Understandably, both prior practices are undesirable for the contractor.

Accordingly, there is a need for a jobsite storage chest that provides a removable tray for carrying tools and equipment back and forth from the chest. Further, there is a need to provide an access in the chest to allow for electrical cord passthrough.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention meets the shortcomings of the prior art by providing a jobsite storage chest with a removable tray. The tray may be provided with holes in its bottom wall for accommodating tools such as pliers, screw dividers, and hammers as well as dividers for compartmentalizing the tray. When the need arises, the tray with all of its contents can be removed from the storage chest and taken to a desired

location. In addition, the tray is capable of sliding movement along the side walls of the chest so that it can be easily moved out of the way when necessary.

The present invention further meets the shortcomings of the prior art by providing an access for electrical cord passthrough. Specifically, the storage chest is provided with an access in the back wall of the storage chest through which an electrical cord can be fed. As a result, power can be safely and easily provided to equipment positioned on the tray.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a perspective view of the jobsite storage chest of the present invention.

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the removable tray shown in Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a perspective, partial cross-sectional view of the removable tray supported on the storage chest of Figure 1.

Figures 4A-C depict the grommet shown in Figure 1.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Through this application, the term “jobsite storage chest” is used. This term has a specific meaning, that being a large storage chest that is placed on a jobsite or a vehicle during a construction project, as opposed to a small, portable handheld toolbox that may be carried with one hand. These chests vary in size, with widths ranging from approximately 19 inches to 30 inches, lengths ranging from

approximately 32 inches to 72 inches and heights ranging from approximately 13 inches to 46 inches. Further, these chests are constructed of 16-gauge steel sheet metal, and thus are very heavy, requiring two people or often a fork lift to move them. Due to their size and construction, these chests can remain overnight at jobsites.

With reference to Figure 1, a jobsite storage chest 10 has a front wall 12, a back wall 14, two side walls 16, 18, and a bottom wall 20. The chest 10 further includes a top cover 22 that is pivotable between an open and a closed position. The cover 22 is provided with a pair of latches 26, 28 that mate with a pair of locking mechanisms (not shown) provided within recesses 32, 34 on the front wall 12 of the chest 10 in order to lock the chest 10. The bottom wall 20 is provided with a pair of skids 36, 38 on which the chest 10 can be rested upon a flat surface. Each side wall 16, 18 has a handle recess 42, 44 that houses a handle 46, 48. The handles 46, 48 may be used to carry the chest 10.

The chest 10 is provided with a tray 50 that has front and back walls 52, 54, two side walls 58, 60, and a bottom wall 62. As seen in Figure 2, each side wall 58, 60 is provided with a flange 62, 64 that projects away from the interior of the tray 50. When the tray 50 is in place in the chest 10, the flanges 62, 64 rest upon the top surface 68 of the handle recesses 42, 44 of the side walls 16, 18 of the chest 10. If desired, plastic strip(s) 70 can be placed along the bottom surface of each flange 62, 64, as shown in Figure 3. The strips 70 make it easier for the tray 50 to be slid from the front of the toolbox to the back of the toolbox and back again, along

the top surfaces 68 of the handle recesses 42, 44. Thus, the tray 50 can be moved out of the way of the contractor when necessary.

As can be seen in Figures 1 and 2, the front and back walls 52, 54 of the tray 50 are segmented. In other words, the front and back walls 52, 54 of the tray 50 are provided with vertical notches 74. The notches 74 in the front wall 52 correspond to those provided in the back wall 54. If the tray 50 is to be compartmentalized, then a divider 76 is inserted between the front and back wall 52, 54, along corresponding notches 74. More than one divider may be used, thereby allowing a number of compartments to be created. For example, the tray can be compartmentalized to separate pliers and screw drivers from the tape measures and from equipment such as battery chargers.

The bottom wall 62 of the tray 50 further defines a plurality of holes 78. The holes 78 may be provided in a variety of sizes. The purpose of the holes 78 is to carry tools such as wrenches, pliers, screwdrivers, and hammers. The tools may be simply inserted into the holes 78 and supported from the tray 50 in a vertical fashion.

As can be appreciated from the figures, the tray 50 is not welded in place, but rather may be removed from the storage chest 10. Thus, if a contractor needs the tools carried in the tray, he can simply lift the tray from the chest and take it to the desired location. Thus, the tray offers a time saving advantage that is not afforded by the currently available jobsite chests.

Now turning to another aspect of the present invention, the storage chest 10 is provided with an access for electrical cord passthrough. As can be seen in Figure 1, the back wall 14 of the chest 10 is provided with a perforated access 82. The exact shape and position of the access 82 can vary as long as it is in reasonable proximity to the tray 50. In the preferred embodiment, the shape of the access 82 is a circular hole.

In use, a contractor knocks out the metal from the perforated access 82 and places a rubber insert or grommet 86 in the access 82. An electrical cord can then be passed through the grommet 86 and connected to a power supply. The grommet 86 protects the cord as well as the inside of the storage chest 10 from direct weather such as rain or snow.

As can be seen from Figures 4A-B, the grommet 86 has an outer circumference 88 provided with a groove 90 for mounting to the back wall 14 of the chest 10. The grommet 86 includes a scored surface 92 that enables a cord to be inserted or removed therethrough. The grommet may be constructed of rubber.

The electrical cord access 82 of the present invention allows electricity to be provided to equipment stored in the chest 10. Thus, battery chargers, for example, carried in the tray 10 can charge batteries overnight once connected to a power source. Further, the grommet 86 protects the cord as well as the inside of the chest from the elements.

The jobsite storage chest is constructed of 16-gauge steel sheet metal as is the tray. Alternately, different gauges of steel may be used.

While certain features and embodiments of the present invention have been described in detail herein, it is to be understood that the invention encompasses all modifications and enhancements within the scope and spirit of the following claims.